Length of Kumarghat-Agartala Railway Project

753. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total length that the Kumarghat-Agartala Railway Project sanctioned in 1996-97, is expected to cover;

(b) the total estimated cost of the project and the allocation of funds made upto 31st March 2000;

(c) the target date for completion of the project; and

(d) the progress of work achieved upto 31st March, 2000?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) 109 kms.

(b) The latest anticipated cost of the work is Rs. 825 crore. Allocation upto 31st March, 2000 is Rs. 63 crore.

(c) The target date for completion of the project has not yet been fixed.

(d) Work has been started in the stretch falling in plain area i.e. 20 km length from Kumarghat end and 40 km length from Agartala end. Final location survey in the remaining length, which is in hilly terrain, is in progress.

Uncomfortable AC compartments

754. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to stated:

(a) whether it is a fact that AC compartments are extremely high risk in times of accidents;

(b) whether the Railways have studied the possibilities of re-designing the AC compartments;

(c) whether it is a fact that people have suffocated in these AC compartments;

(d) what are the reasons for Rai'ways ignoring safety

consideration; and

(e) the steps proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No Sir.

(b) The improvements in the design of coaches is a continuous process. Several improvements aimed at better reliability, safety and comfort have been introduced on AC coaches from time to time. Some of the modifications presently under implementation are:

(i) Introduction of Bogie mounted Air Brakes.

(ii) UIC vestibules.

(iii) Introduction of Roof mounted Air-conditioning units.

(iv) Introduction of Fire retardant curtains and furnishings.

(v) Provision of emergency exit windows.

(c) There are not such reported cases of any casualty/injury to passengers due to suffocation.

(d) to (e) No Sir, Railway accords highest priority to safety in trains operations. However, safety in train operation is an ongoing and continuous process. Efforts are made to prevent accidents by progressively implementing safety measures (enclosed as statement) depending upon the availability of resources.

Statement

Brief steps taken to prevent accidents

1. The work of track circuiting has been accelerated on the trunk routes and other important main lines.
2. Modification of the signaling circuitry is being carried out to minimize chances of human errors in causing accidents.
3. Auxiliary warning system for giving advance warning about 'signal at danger' to the driver of the running train has been commissioned on Mumbai suburban sections.

4. Railway Board has cleared a pilot project of AWS for Tuglakabad—Mathura section of Central Railway on a trial basis.

5. Walkie-Talkie sets have been supplied to Drivers and Guards of all Passenger carrying trains. The same is presently being supplied to Drivers and Guards of goods trains also.

6. There has been progressive increase in use of Tie Tamping and ballast cleaning machines for track maintenance.

7. For monitoring track geometry and running characteristics of the track, sophisticated track recording cars, oscillograph cars and portable an accelerometer are being progressively used.

8. For detecting rail fractures and weld failures, 96 more Double Rail Ultra Sonic Flaw Detectors are being procured.

9. Maintenance facilities for coaches and wagons have been modernized and upgraded at many depots.

10. To prevent cases of cold breakage of axles, ROH Depots have been equipped with ultrasonic testing equipment for detection of flaws in the axles.

11. Whistle boards/speed breakers and road signs have been provided at unmanned level crossings and visibility for drivers has been improved.

12. Audio-visual publicity campaigns to educate road users on how to make a safe crossing are conducted.

13. Steps have been taken to prevent inflammable and explosive materials from being carried in passenger trains.

14. Periodic Safety Audit of different divisions by inter-disciplinary teams from zonal headquarters has been introduced.

15. Training facilities for drivers, guards and staff connected with train operation have been modernized including use of simulators for training of drivers.

16. Refresher courses are regularly organised at specified intervals.

17. Performance of the staff connected with train operation is being constantly monitored and those found deficient are sent for crash training.

18. Periodical safety drives are conducted to inculcate safety consciousness among the staff.

Measures to improve safety (Fire in trains):

1. Carriage of inflammable/explosive material and lighted sigris in passenger coaches is prohibited and punishable under the Railway Act, 1989.

2. An intensive campaign through public address system has been launched to sensitize the public about the dangers from explosives and need to maintain extreme vigilance regarding unclaimed/ unattended objects.

3. Intensive publicity is carried out through televisions quickies, advertisements in the National and local press to educate the public against the hazards of carrying inflammable material in their luggage.

4. Mail and Express trains have been provided with escorts with directions to conduct random checks on the passengers and luggage in the trains over sensitive areas.

5. Instant Action Groups have been provided in important trains to prevent entry of unauthorized passengers and carrying of inflammable articles etc.

New Railway station near Shoranur in Kerala

755. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a representation demanding for consuction of a new railway station complex near Shoranur in Kerala; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's response thereto?